

Jackson, a member of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, said: "Since President Woodrow Wilson sent Marines to Haiti in 1915, the U. S. has had an inconsistent policy toward Haiti, the poorest country in our hemisphere. We have not put forth or practiced a long-term plan to bring stability, democracy and prosperity in Haiti.

"There are recent striking examples of this contradictory American policy over the last 10 years.

"While the Clinton Administration strongly supported President Jean-Bertrand Aristide – in 1994, after a coupe, the U.S. sent in 20,000 troops to restore him to power – the current U.S. government has withdrawn all U.S. assistance to Haiti and given advice and moral support to rebel forces.

"The result? There has been economic stagnation and turmoil in Haiti. More than 40 people have been killed in February alone.

"The United States must put forth a unified long-term policy of: (1) a commitment to democracy and the rule of law; (2) dialogue as opposed to violence and destruction; (3) compromises by both the government and rebel forces that restore a just and lasting peace, with respect for all Haitians; (4) negotiations and reconciliation of government and rebel differences; and (5) a long-term plan for balanced economic growth and development, which advances Haiti and benefits the average Haitian.

"If the U.S. engages in a strong diplomatic effort now, combined with a long-term balanced growth and economic development plan, the world might yet be able to avoid more bloodshed, or yet another military intervention or action later," Jackson concluded.